

USAWC RESEARCH PAPER

THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN ENDING LIMITED WARS

A MONOGRAPH

by

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ABSTRACT

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→ The purpose of this paper is to determine if the role of the military can be improved in ending limited wars. In examining this problem it was determined that wars drag on due to a number of factors related to: (1) frequent failures of policy makers in exercising their planning responsibilities; (2) deleterious effects of politics, the public, and diplomacy on war termination; and (3) difficulties in fighting limited wars. These problems are discussed based on data from related studies, memoir literature written by individuals occupying key governmental positions, and other miscellaneous documents providing historical or general background information. The study concludes that the multifarious problems associated with war termination do not lend themselves to simple solutions and every effort should be made to end wars before they begin. Should deterrence fail, actions and decisions related to the selection of limited war objectives, establishment of political constraints, development of conflict termination plans, employment of military power, and solicitation of public support should be modified to prevent repetition of errors committed in the conduct of prior wars.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II there have been thirty-five conflicts of sufficient magnitude to be referred to as "limited wars."¹ Two of these conflicts, Korea and Vietnam, were of great concern to the United States and resulted in a vast expenditure of lives and money as well as considerable conflict within and criticism of the American society. Of the nine major wars fought by the United States since 1775, Vietnam and Korea became the fourth and fifth costliest wars respectively in terms of battle deaths, third and fifth costliest wars respectively in terms of wounded in action, and second and third costliest wars respectively in terms of dollar costs. In addition, because of the prolonged nature of these two wars, the United States has been engaged in actual combat for more than fifty-percent of the time since the end of World War II.² These shocking statistics make two facts starkly apparent: first, that the United States may again become involved in a limited war; and second, that if we continue to fight limited wars as we have in the past, they will surely be long and costly.

THE PROBLEM

The problem therefore is to determine if the role of the military can be improved in ending limited wars.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this monograph is to determine possible procedures to be followed, strategies to be employed, and actions to be taken by the military to restore an honorable peace in a more expeditious and less costly manner if again called upon to fight a limited war.

LIMITATION

The major limitation of this study is the lack of sufficient empirical evidence to accurately determine correct principles or doctrine to be universally applied to all limited war situations. There have been too few limited wars fought by major powers under the threat of nuclear escalation, and further, the ". . . United States tactics for enticing the enemy to the bargaining table have been notably unsuccessful . . ." ³ in both Korea and Vietnam. Theorizing on what might have happened using alternative solutions results in nothing but "unproven theories," not "answers." For this reason, the author does not expect to "solve" all the problems of war termination. Rather, it is hoped that additional study of this complex problem may contribute to the small but growing list of writings on a much neglected subject.

METHODOLOGY

The author has relied heavily on the few available publications on related subjects, on memoir literature written by

individuals occupying key positions of responsibility in the United States government, on various articles and periodicals by personnel having an expertise concerning a particular aspect of limited war, and on books which provide necessary background information on strategy, principles of war, human relations, political science, and international relations. Using information from these sources, the author discusses in Chapter II the frequent failures of policy makers in exercising their planning responsibilities, followed by suggestions for partially eliminating these difficulties in future conflicts. Using this same procedure of first identifying difficulties in ending wars based upon historical examples and then offering possible solutions, the problems associated with civilian-military relations are discussed in Chapter III and difficulties associated with the conduct of military operations are discussed in Chapter IV. In Chapter V, the final chapter, the author attempts to draw conclusions from the previous discussion in order to determine how the role of the military can be improved in ending limited war.

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

1. Quincy Wright, "How Hostilities Have Ended: Peace Treaties and Alternatives," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies: How Wars End, Vol. 392, November 1970, p. 60. Note: Figures cited have been adjusted to include subsequent conflicts.

2. "Price of America's 9 Major Wars - How Vietnam Compares," U.S. News & World Report, 13 November 1972, pp. 28-29.

3. William T. R. Fox, "The Causes of Peace and Conditions of War," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies: How Wars End, Vol. 392, November 1970, p. 5.

CHAPTER II

PLANNING FOR WAR

Numerous reasons have been hypothesized for prolonging a limited war long after it has become starkly apparent to all concerned that there is little to be gained by continued fighting. This chapter will examine many of the reasons for wars dragging on that are directly related to the manner in which policy makers exercise their planning responsibilities. Specifically, this chapter will discuss the frequent failures of policy makers in examining the many uncertainties of war, in planning an ending to war, in selecting wartime objectives, and in establishing national priorities.

UNCERTAINTY IN WAR

War, and events leading up to war, contain many uncertainties, Karl Von Clausewitz stated: "A great part of the information obtained in war is contradictory, a still greater part is false, and by far the greatest part somewhat doubtful."¹ When faced with a limited war situation, the policy maker must: make estimates and provide safeguards against such uncertainties as the enemy's capabilities, intentions, and will to counter proposed actions by the United States; determine United States military, economic, and political capabilities for accomplishing stated national objectives; estimate the support that the war will receive from the United States public and from our allies; estimate the degree of outside

help that will be given to the enemy; and finally, compare the probable cost of the war to the probable gains to be derived from fighting.

In the face of these many uncertainties, key decisions must be made based upon all available information and with due consideration given to the many unknowns. In examining the role of governments in conducting war, however, Fred C. Ikle determined in Every War Must End that:

. . . government leaders frequently fail to acknowledge those uncertainties or to take them into account in their decisions. Instead, they often implicitly assume answers to questions that they have never examined.²

In addition to the frequent failure to acknowledge many uncertainties, the policy maker may also be influenced in dealing with other uncertainties by the optimism of the field commander, who, having failed to look beyond the borders of the country in which he is fighting and the capabilities of the presently deployed enemy force, sincerely believes ". . . that success in the form of military victory is possible."³ An example of this was General MacArthur in his conduct of the Korean War, who ". . . had faith in his ability to win, provided that he was given the necessary support and the necessary freedom to conduct combat operations as he believed necessary."⁴ This same optimistic view was exhibited by French generals in both Algeria and Indo-China⁵ and by a number of American generals in Vietnam.⁶ President Truman's observations concerning his military advice during the Korean War are reflected in his memoirs as follows:

Today's military leaders are almost all technical specialists, and it is only natural that each should feel that his particular specialty is the most important aspect of the national defense picture. The same goes for the geographic distribution of national strength. Each commander feels that it is his duty to have his area interests taken care of first, often without consideration of what goes on elsewhere in the world.⁷

It is always easy, with hindsight, to find where policy makers have either failed to examine many of the uncertainties of war or where they have examined unknowns and come up with wrong answers. It is also easy to find cases where military leaders have given shallow advice, based upon either service or command interest or where they have failed to give full consideration to many relevant factors, particularly in regard to probable enemy responses to their proposals for obtaining additional resources for their command. In preparing for and fighting limited wars, it must be recognized that regardless of the sophistication of our planning effort, uncertainties will exist. This fact must be acknowledged and adequate flexibility and fall-back positions must be incorporated into all war plans to insure a reasonable degree of success against any eventuality.

FAILURE TO PLAN AN ENDING

Closely related to the uncertainties of war, and probably to a degree because of them, governments have failed to plan for an ending to wars. Nations seem to drift with events until they find themselves at war, and then, only after a rather prolonged period of conflict do they begin to seriously consider ways to bring the

unwanted war to an end. A government must have a master plan, concept, or strategy for pursuing any course of action if all branches of government are to actively work together, yet more frequently than not, nations go to war without any notion of how the war may eventually terminate. This seemed to be true, in varying degrees, in both Korea and Vietnam, where early attention seemed to be devoted almost exclusively to the accomplishment of a specific military operation rather than to the development of a grand over-all strategy specifically designed to end the war as well as to preserve vital and specified national interests. Fred C. Ikle remarked, in Every War Must End:

Many wars in this century have been started with only the most nebulous expectations regarding the outcome, on the strength of plans that paid little, if any, attention to the ending. Many began inadvertently, without any plans at all.⁸

Ikle also observed that although considerable time and effort have been devoted toward planning for the introduction of forces and for specific military operations:

. . . very few military officers or civilian analysts are given the time and opportunity to put all these pieces together and to prepare estimates that bear directly on the over-all strategy and that will help to show how the entire undertaking might be brought to a satisfactory end.⁹

In a similar vein, Herman Kahn wrote, in On Escalation:

If I were to pinpoint what I believe to be the single greatest lack in U.S. central war planning, it would be insufficient thought about how and under what conditions we would wish to terminate a war¹⁰

To minimize the duration of war, this nation, as well as other nations, should develop a grand over-all strategy for ending each conflict at the earliest opportunity. Such a plan should, as a minimum, identify vital national interests, define objectives, establish constraints on both the military and civilian sectors, and develop a concept for the coordinated use of all elements of national power in bringing an end to the conflict.

SELECTING LIMITED WAR OBJECTIVES

There are two types of actions with respect to the selection of objectives which prolong wars: first, the changing of objectives, normally in an upward manner as a result of a temporary battlefield success; and second, the declaration of unrealistically high objectives by either an intransigent or overzealous government.

Korea is a good example of both of these errors. Looking first at the problem of changing objectives, the United States objectives in Korea were initially ". . . intended only to restore South Korean territory and reestablish peace in the area."¹¹ Following the significant success of the Inchon landing, however, ". . . U.S. and U.N. policy makers abandoned the initial limited objectives and expanded them to include reunification of a "free" Korea."¹² This expanded objective was clearly unacceptable to the communist side and further put pressure on them ". . . to expand the war in order to reverse the battlefield decision. . . ."¹³ This was what China did in fact do when U.N. ". . . forces were marching to the border, obliterating a buffer state which protected China's vital industrial concentration in Manchuria."¹⁴

Escalating or otherwise changing objectives, in addition to running the risk of confusing and misleading the enemy into taking actions which lead toward a more prolonged war, also serves to confuse and to divide our own war effort. Donald F. Bletz, referring to the problem of selecting objectives during limited wars, stated in The Role of the Military Professional in U.S.

Foreign Policy:

. . . the objectives are the variables and therefore subject to constant modification, thus making it even more difficult for the administration to state clearly the national objectives. All this, of course, makes it more difficult for the diplomat and the soldier to perform their assigned functions, and in combination the above factors make it virtually impossible for the public to understand what the policy maker is doing.¹⁵

This practice of one or both sides constantly changing their objectives during limited wars has badly violated the concept that:

Wars--limited or unlimited--must be tied to national policy, and should not be fought for vague or ill-defined reasons lest they lead to conflict and disagreement among the polity, particularly in a democracy.¹⁶

Charles Lerche and Abdul Said also emphasized the importance of precisely formulating objectives but for slightly different reasons.

They observed that precise objectives provide the policy maker

". . . a means of concentrating his attention and effort on crucial issues . . ." and also ". . . because he can better appraise degrees of success or failure if he is quite clear about his aims."¹⁷

The second error related to limited war objectives comes from the selection of unreasonably high objectives. An example of this was when Jacob Malik, Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations,

stated on December 13, 1950, that withdrawal of foreign troops was ". . . the first condition for a settlement of the Korean question."¹⁸

On December 22, 1950, Chou En-lai, China's Foreign Minister, declared the basis for negotiating a peaceful settlement would have to be withdrawal of all foreign troops from both Korea and Taiwan. Such conditions were clearly too high for the United States to seriously consider and had to be dropped by the communist states before negotiations could be started.¹⁹

"While it may take only one to make a total war it takes two to make a limited war"²⁰

When objectives are enunciated that are clearly higher than an enemy can accept, there is no recourse but to raise the level of conflict if there is a capability to do so. Continued fighting in such a situation provides hope for a better ending than is possible with an immediate settlement with clearly unacceptable terms. The lesson here is that if war is to remain limited, objectives must also be limited and terms must be of such a nature that each side can claim partial or limited victory.²¹

Major powers have frequently tried to impose totally unacceptable terms on small powers, only to learn that men will become fanatical when given no choice but to fight or to lose their political power, their freedom, or their lives. In the Boer War it was learned that "A major power could find no way to prevent hostilities against a tiny opponent from dragging on."²² The same lesson was learned during our involvement in Nicaragua between 1927 and 1933 when ". . . United States troops were unable to capture Sandino or destroy his small but effective force"²³ over a

period of approximately six years. This difficulty in defeating a small but determined enemy was again confirmed in Finland's Winter War with the Soviet Union in 1939 and 1940 during which it was proven that ". . . the side whose war aims in a local war require only that the enemy not finally defeat it, is a formidable opponent even to a major power."²⁴

Another problem which exists when objectives are initially too high is that it may be politically difficult for a government to reorient objectives downward and remain in power, as unrealized war aims cause internal political turmoil. This difficulty has frequently caused wars to be prolonged until after internal problems could be resolved and new political leadership could be brought to power. Although this point will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, it is stated at this time to point out that unrealistically high demands merely prolong a limited war not only by preventing serious negotiations and by causing the enemy to escalate force levels, but also because it may be impossible to start serious negotiations at all until after one or both of the sides have concluded an internal struggle for political leadership.

In selecting limited war objectives, the policy maker must have a clear understanding of vital national interests. Keeping these interests in mind, limited war objectives must be precisely formulated, not only to insure that these interests are protected, but also to provide a degree of acceptability to the opponent. If war is to remain limited, both sides must eventually share in the

victory. As stated in the United States Army War College Military Strategy Textbook,

. . . the objectives sought by the use of force should be reasonable and attainable; for, if they are not, it is unlikely that an appropriate balance between means and ends can be reached.²⁵

As has been pointed out, a clear-cut victory in the normal sense is neither reasonable nor attainable, and therefore should not be expected in limited war. As one military writer expressed the meaning of victory in a limited war situation,

. . . victory is a rather barren word by itself. . . . Victory will have been achieved only when the participant has done what he has set out to do. . . . victory at the national level is defined simply as the achievement of the national objective or objectives.²⁶

Once reasonable objectives have been selected in accordance with these concepts, the policy maker should not be tempted to escalate these objectives based upon limited battlefield success, but rather, should seek to use success as leverage to persuade his opponent to accept terms which provide limited victory for both sides. Objectives, if they have been wisely selected and truly protect vital national interests, should remain unchanged throughout a limited war as the central focus of the country's military, economic, political, and psychological effort in bringing about an end to the conflict.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Another reason for wars dragging on has been the impact of initial national priorities on the conduct of the war. Since the

end of World War II, the prevention of general war has been the primary concern of policy makers during the early stages of all limited wars. Throughout both Korea and Vietnam, priority was given first to limiting these wars and later to securing national objectives and to finding honorable ends to these wars. These priorities are stated by President Truman in his memoirs, Years of Trial and Hope:

Every decision I made in connection with the Korean conflict had this one aim in mind: to prevent a third world war and the terrible destruction it would bring to the civilized world. This meant that we should not do anything that would provide the excuse to the Soviets and plunge the free nations into full-scale all-out war.²⁷

Over the years since the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, world leaders have come to realize that there can be no winner in a general war between the two nuclear super-powers.

Henry Kissinger wrote in 1965:

United States strategic doctrine has thus had to face the fact that in the nuclear age, a general war fought by purely military criteria must have catastrophic consequences.²⁸

Robert S. McNamara expressed this same fear of nuclear war when he wrote in 1968: ". . . that the Soviet Union and the United States can mutually destroy one another regardless of who strikes first. . . ." ²⁹

As a result of this "balance of terror," there are no limited war objectives that are worth the consequences of a general nuclear war. Yet this obsession by policy makers to keep wars limited, although a correct one in the view of this writer, placed the first

priority for all actions upon the prevention of nuclear war. This resulted in the establishment of an excessive number of constraints during the initial stages of conflict, a gradual relaxation of constraints during later stages of conflict, and a piecemeal commitment of military forces. This resulted in less effective use of force in securing national objectives in the area of the conflict and in finding an end to the war. The priorities were right but the manner in which they were applied was wrong.

The policy maker must recognize that in any war there is risk, and failure to secure vital objectives in a limited war may only draw nuclear war that much nearer. When deciding whether to enter into a limited war, careful thought must be given to the risk of escalation. If the risk is too grave, the excessive number of constraints required to minimize this risk will preclude a reasonable chance of success in preserving vital national interests and in finding an honorable end to the conflict. Thus, if limited war is fought in an environment that permits only piecemeal commitment of forces, it is not likely to be a short war.

CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

1. Karl Von Clausewitz, On War, p. 51.
2. Fred C. Ikle, Every War Must End, p. 17.
3. Morton H. Halperin, "War Termination as a Problem in Civil-Military Relations," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies, November 1970, p. 87.
4. Ibid., p. 88.
5. Ibid.
6. Neil Sheehan, et al., The Pentagon Papers; As Published by the New York Times, pp. 502-620.
7. Harry S. Truman, Memoirs by Harry S. Truman; Years of Trial and Hope, Vol. II, p. 345.
8. Ikle, p. 108.
9. Ibid., p. 18.
10. Herman Kahn, On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios, p. 201.
11. Arthur E. Brown, Jr., Col., "The Strategy of Limited War," US Army War College Military Strategy Textbook, Vol. III, p. 20.
12. Donald F. Bletzt, The Role of the Military Professional in U.S. Foreign Policy, p. 226.
13. Morton H. Halperin, Limited War in the Nuclear Age, p. 32.
14. Michael A. Krasner, "The Decision to Cross the 38th Parallel," Military Review, October 1972, p. 19.
15. Bletzt, pp. 246-247.
16. Brown, p. 3.
17. Charles O. Lerch, Jr. and Abdul A. Said, Concepts of International Politics, 2d ed., p. 28.
18. Ikle, p. 88.
19. Ibid.

20. Bletzt, p. 242.
21. Ibid.
22. William T. R. Fox, "The Causes of Peace and Conditions of War," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies, November 1970, p. 5.
23. Bryce Wood, "How Wars End in Latin America," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies, November 1970, p. 47.
24. Fox, p. 6.
25. Brown, p. 3.
26. Bletzt, p. 240.
27. Truman, p. 345.
28. Henry A. Kissinger, Problems of National Strategy: A Book of Readings, p. 16.
29. Robert S. McNamara, The Essence of Security, p. 59.

CHAPTER III

INTEGRATING THE CIVILIAN-MILITARY WAR EFFORT

The military must be quite sensitive to the impact of politics, the public, and diplomacy on the conduct of military operations, and in turn, how military actions and advice impact upon both the public and the policy maker. Military force is but one element of national power, and to be effective, it must be properly coordinated with the economic, political, and psycho-social power of the nation. This chapter will briefly examine some of the more important aspects of how the non-military sectors of our society play an influential role in unnecessarily prolonging war.

INTERNAL POLITICAL STRUGGLES

Frequently it is more difficult to find agreement within one's own country on how to end a limited war than it is to reach agreement with an enemy. As Fred C. Ikle pointed out, ". . . planning to end a war where victory seems out of reach is not a task on which men can easily collaborate. To search for an exit in such a situation, government leaders can rarely move in harmony."¹ The reasons for this are quite complex and are closely tied to the perspectives of various political, economic, and military factions. Morton H. Halperin, when writing on civil-military relations, stated:

These different perspectives will lead each of the participants, in the process of determining a position on specific war termination issues, to view proposals differently. When an issue affecting

war termination arises, field commanders will see it in terms of obtaining a military victory in the field, services will be concerned with the implications for postwar missions and postwar budgets, political leaders with the postwar domestic situation at home, and Foreign Offices with postwar diplomacy. Thus, various proposals will appear as either threats or opportunities, according to one's perspective.²

Probably the most important single factor in prolonging a war is the desire of the political leader and his party to remain in power. After the initial stages of war and a number of uncertainties have been removed, it usually becomes apparent to one or both sides that certain estimates were wrong or errors in judgment were committed. Yet to admit such errors, to seek peace terms below originally stated aims, or to make peace while losing a war may be political suicide. Almost any solution that does not provide limited victory of a "face-saving" nature will result in the personal humiliation of the political leader in power and the fall of his government. As a result, the political leadership initiating a war will be forced either to escalate the war or to fight with available means beyond the point of conventional logic.

It may be equally hard to obtain consensus in a country following spectacular military success. The winner normally sees greater gains by: (1) continuing the war and escalating the objectives to compensate for losses, (2) making the enemy pay for bringing about the conflict, (3) expanding individual or national grandeur, and (4) increasing economic gain. Few individuals, political factions, or special interest groups can see the logic of seeking only modest objectives when there is apparent victory on the

battlefield. The net result is dissatisfaction and again political suicide for the incumbent leader if a settlement is reached far below the expectations of the general public or of too many of the various special interest groups in the country.

For any settlement, including stalemate situations, the government in power must have obtained some form of political consensus. Until this occurs, each faction will fight on to protect parochial interests, which in turn, divide the government and prevent serious negotiations. In a democracy, these groups also attempt to gain popular support for their cause. Unless the government in power has a clear and emotionally appealing objective, hopefully determined by popular consensus through public debate, divided factions will have little difficulty in eroding popular support for any war, and in particular, a protracted and limited war fought for limited objectives. The political turmoil which occurs in these situations may prevent one side from participating in serious negotiations and may also discourage the other side from negotiating by providing them with false hopes concerning the national resolve of their opponent.

It takes time to arrive at a popular consensus in a democracy or to determine an acceptable course of action among the ruling clique in other forms of government. In addition to time, it may also require a change in political leadership. Normally a prominent figure of unquestionable patriotism, such as an Eisenhower, a de Gaulle, or a Mannerheim, must assume power before a feasible ending can be accepted, and then only after the public has had an

opportunity to voice its dislike for the war. Until such time as there is a consensus on an acceptable ending of a limited nature within all of the participating governments, serious negotiations are quite unlikely.³

It is too idealistic to suggest that each faction set aside parochial interests for the national good, but it is suggested that an attempt be made to develop a consensus either before or during the early stages of a conflict in order to make the pain of gaining eventual consensus less acute. With wider debate and acceptance of limited war objectives at the outset of a war, all subsequent effort can be focused upon ending that war rather than on trying to decide what the war is all about.

PUBLIC OPINION

In this age of mass communications, public opinion is playing an ever-increasing role in formulating governmental policies in a democracy. Public support plays two key roles in determining the outcome and the length of a war. First, public support is required before an elected official has the political freedom to take actions necessary to fight a war in an effective manner, and secondly, public support for a war is helpful to the diplomat in negotiating a settlement.

Wars disrupt democratic societies in a number of ways. Men are taken from their peacetime occupations; the peacetime economies of nations are disrupted; the public is required to pay for the war in the form of either a tax increase or with inflation; many sectors

of the society must suffer the discomforts of dislocation, separation, and the diminution of goods and services; and finally and most important, men are asked to give up their lives for their country. Knowing of the unpopularity of actions that disrupt the society in time of war, political leaders try to fight limited wars without mobilization. A lack of public support for limited wars also restrains the policy maker's flexibility in making sound operational decisions. This factor may inhibit a policy maker from taking bold actions that would have to be explained to the public and results in a very gradual or piecemeal commitment of forces. Although this point will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter, it should be noted here that public support for war is absolutely essential to the political leader of the country if he is to have the necessary freedom of action required to conduct effective military operations.

Public support for a war is also most helpful to the negotiator. If an enemy knows that the people in a democratic nation will not support a war, there is little incentive to seek an early end to the conflict. In summarizing the advantages of public support for war during negotiations, William Fox stated: ". . . bargaining capability is enhanced if the public is sufficiently hostile in tone to keep open an option to return to the battlefield. . . ." ⁴ President Nixon was also privately quoted by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak as saying during the presidential election of 1972, ". . . that if he had a 10-point margin over his Democratic opponent by early September, Hanoi would be compelled to bargain

in earnest for a compromise Vietnam settlement."⁵ The article went on to state:

In fact, Mr. Nixon was running 34 points ahead of Sen. George McGovern in the Gallup Poll as of Aug. 30. It was, then, no surprise either to him or his negotiator, Henry Kissinger, when Le Duc Tho, Hanoi's negotiator, offered on Oct. 8 in Paris the outline of a peace proposal that collapsed North Vietnam's granite demands for virtual American surrender.⁶

The timing of Hanoi's peace overtures makes it apparent that Hanoi carefully observed the pulse of United States public opinion and attempted to use public opinion to gain what could not be gained through military action alone.

Favorable public opinion, if not absolutely essential, is certainly helpful in providing a wartime environment in which there is adequate support, operational freedom of action, and a better atmosphere for negotiating a settlement. It therefore becomes imperative that public debate and consensus be reached either before or during the early days of war, for in a democratic society, "support wanes as the time involvement increases."⁷ The military, rather than cloaking concern for national security in secrecy, must move for open public debate at an early time. The public is far more likely to give support at or near the beginning of a war than at any other time, and if such support is not possible, it is better to find out about it at an early time rather than after a half million men have been committed to battle. The policy maker and the military alike must recognize the need for public support and insure that such support for the war is available. In addition, expressions of this support should be obtained from the Congress

(lest they be forgotten), and most important for the military, that sufficient force be used to quickly and efficiently accomplish the assigned task while the public remains fully committed to the war effort.

NEGOTIATING PEACE SETTLEMENTS

The first problem in negotiating the end to war is that war⁸ inhibits negotiations. Emphasis shifts from the diplomat to the military as both sides attempt to resolve the problem with military might. No matter what the problem, fighting intensifies the feelings of hostility, and further, the negotiating gap is widened as positions are sharpened and more is expected as a⁹ justification for incurring the normal sacrifices of war.

Although diplomacy tends to break down with the initiation of hostilities, the needs for diplomacy go up. As Schelling points out in Arms and Influence, limited war can be thought of as a "bargaining process." There is bargaining about the way the war is to be fought; or a definition of the limited nature of the war in such terms as the types of weapons, participants and geographic areas involved; next, bargaining about a cease fire, or ways to halt the war; third, bargaining about the political regime in the area of conflict; fourth, disposition of residual forces; fifth, disarmament and inspection arrangements; and finally, the political status of the various countries or territories involved in the conflict. In addition to these broad areas, other separate issues,¹⁰ such as prisoners, may also present special negotiating problems.

In the negotiating of each of these issues, the diplomat is faced with a number of problems. First, with whom does he negotiate? In the case of Vietnam, the United States had to consider the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), the National Liberation Front (NLF), the Saigon government, other U.S. allies, and finally, the communist nations providing material assistance to the DRV and NLF. Next was the problem of deciding on which issues to negotiate. In the case of Vietnam, the United States showed ". . . interest in settling first of all the military problems. . ." while the DRV and NLF pressed ". . . for quite reverse priorities . . .".¹¹ Similar problems have occurred in other limited wars such as in the conflict between France and the Algerian rebels. In this conflict,

. . . de Gaulle announced he would negotiate Algerian independence only if the rebels first ceased their attacks; but the rebels refused, apparently fearing that a cease-fire would lead to the disintegration of their forces or to internal strife.¹²

Thus, wars are frequently prolonged when sides can't agree on either the preconditions for negotiations or on what issues to negotiate.

Other problems involve distortions in making peace offerings, during which one side may deliberately blur the terms of the offering.¹³ Statesmen may also miss signals from the opposing side or they may deliberately fail to respond to weak signals

. . . because basic strategy suggests they come out better that way. Forcing an opponent to make his signals extremely clear may produce more favorable terms, and also guard against the other side defaulting on his promises.¹⁵

Throughout these delicate stages of negotiation, extreme care must be taken not to ". . . upset the uneasy political truce in the losing country that keeps the government together while the 'doves' overrule the 'hawks.'" ¹⁶ Yet all of this sparring for position takes considerable time before substantive issues can be addressed--and the war grinds on.

The diplomat has many other problems in negotiating an end to a limited war. The purpose here, however, is neither to discuss all of these problems nor to suggest ways for improving negotiations, but rather, to provide an appreciation for a few of the negotiator's problems and to suggest how the role of the military may be improved in assisting negotiations. Basically there are four ways. First, the military must insure that there is a common understanding of the government's master strategy for ending the war and that all actions are closely coordinated to insure a unity of effort. Second, the military must insure that forces are carefully employed in strict compliance with political constraints and guidance ". . . to insure that the force not be used in ways which destroy the credibility of the peace overture." ¹⁷ Third, the military must not become so enamored with military success, or hope of success, that they destroy the negotiating effort with cries of "not now" when the plan says "now." And fourth, and perhaps most important, the military must display technical competence in accomplishing each mission in a highly effective manner. Complete tactical success and an overwhelming

and ever increasing capability to take by force more than is asked at the negotiating table should materially assist in demonstrating to the enemy the logic of accepting reasonable peace overtures.

CHAPTER III

FOOTNOTES

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3. Ikle, pp. 52-94.
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12. Ikle, p. 87.
13. George H. Quester, "Wars Prolonged by Misunderstood Signals," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies, November 1970, p. 35.
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CHAPTER IV

MILITARY OPERATIONS

The military faces special problems in the conduct of limited war operations. As the military learned in both Korea and Vietnam, ". . . a limited war is a much more difficult operation than a total war."¹ The difficulties associated with the role of the military and the actual conduct of military operations should be recognized as they can and do play a central role in either prolonging or terminating a war.

There is, of course, a significant consanguinity between the joint military-civilian handling of the problems already discussed and the conduct of military operations. It is axiomatic that the military will have a difficult time in accomplishing a mission that is not clearly understood and not wholly supported by the American public. As one military writer concluded after studying some of the problems of fighting a limited war,

The will to win totally and completely has historically been an inherent and fundamental part of the American character in both the theoretical and absolute sense. Applied to war, this will to win found its fulfillment in the two great total wars of this century with their total victories. It found confusion and frustration in the limited war in Korea with its inconclusive termination only to be further frustrated by the even more limited and less conclusive effort in Vietnam.²

In addition to the psychological aspects and planning difficulties in fighting such a war, the military also has been hampered in conducting combat operations due to constraints and a lack of

national support. This chapter first examines each of these problems, then discusses various strategic concepts for employment of military forces in limited wars, and concludes with a few brief remarks on the responsibilities of the military.

CONSTRAINTS

The military professional has had

. . . to accept the fact that in limited war there are "limitations" within which he will be required to conduct his operations and that those limitations are a necessary constraint in pursuit of the national objective.³

These constraints are designed to prevent a limited war from escalating into a nuclear war or into a much larger conventional war, and generally take the form of limitations in terms of types of weapons, types of targets, nationalities of targets or participants, types or size of force to be employed, and geographic areas in which to conduct operations.

The concept of having constraints on military actions is a correct and necessary one. According to Carl von Clausewitz,

War is an instrument of policy; it must necessarily bear on its character, it must measure with its scale. The conduct of war, in its great features, is therefore policy itself, which takes up the sword in place of the pen, but does not on that account cease to think according to its own laws.⁴

Although the concept of constraints is correct and necessary to insure that war remains an instrument of policy, an incorrect application of this concept can lead to an ineffective use of military power. This is what did in fact occur in Vietnam where

the gradual modification of constraints on a day to day basis throughout the first several years of the war prevented the military from employing available forces in an optimum manner. This experience once again indicated that the method of employing force can be more important than sheer numbers. As an example of this, during April of 1965, John A. McCone, Director of CIA, criticized the ineffectiveness of the piecemeal air effort in North Vietnam and stated:

. . . that the strikes to date have not caused a change in the North Vietnamese policy of directing Viet Cong insurgency, infiltrating cadres and supplying material. If anything, the strikes to date have hardened their attitude.⁵

McCone went on to state that for the air effort to be effective we must:

. . . change the ground rules of the strikes against North Vietnam. We must hit them harder, more frequently, and inflict greater damage. . . . This, in my opinion, must be done promptly and with minimum restraint.⁶

Even with these views from the Director of CIA it was not until late in the first Nixon administration that airpower was employed in the suggested manner. But by this time, U.S. ground forces had departed the theater and the public had turned sour on the war. Because of the timing, these strikes too were less effective than they might have been. The use of airpower in a less constrained manner did, however, prove to be much more successful than the overly constrained strikes of the earlier era in bringing Hanoi to

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the negotiating table in October of 1972 and in ending the conflict in January of 1973.

The policy maker, in establishing constraints, must attempt to provide the greatest flexibility to the military from the beginning, while still keeping the level of conflict within acceptable limits. The guideline for establishment of constraints should be similar to the guideline for employment of forces -- constraints should be made in mass rather than piecemeal. To illustrate this point, the following quote is cited from the United States Army War College Military Strategy Textbook:

While a nation would hardly depend on strategic nuclear weapons to gain relatively unimportant national objectives, it should also shy away from being overly cautious in limiting the application of force, the lack of which would risk nonattainment of the disputed objectives. US response to the Dominican Republic crisis in 1965 is an example of having sufficient force available to stabilize the situation. In fact, the Dominican Republic intervention and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 suggest that the more force used, or threatened, the faster the crisis ends and the lower is the cost.⁸

In these two examples, political constraints, although adequate to prevent unacceptable escalation, permitted the effective use (or threat of use) of force in "mass" with "speed" and "surprise."⁹ In contrast, the gradual modification of constraints throughout the Vietnam conflict directly precluded the employment of available forces in the most effective manner. Constraints must dictate

the parameters of the war and not the manner in which it is fought, for the method of using military force can be more important than sheer numbers. To use the words of Fred Ikle in Every War Must End, ". . . a gradual buildup of forces or increased attacks that the enemy can readily absorb will not accomplish the desired effect." ¹⁰ If politically imposed constraints require excessive limitations within which military forces cannot be effectively employed, it is better not to fight a war. A political settlement can normally be reached with better terms when based on a threat of war than can be secured following military defeat or when public pressure forces unilateral withdrawal.

SUPPORT OF THE WAR EFFORT

The second major problem faced by the military in the conduct of combat operations during both the Korean and Vietnam wars was a lack of support. What is meant here is that neither the moral nor the material support of the nation were fully behind the armed forces. There were two major implications: first, there were fewer resources with which to fight (at the time they were needed), and second, and perhaps equally as important, the failure to mobilize available resources during these wars demonstrated a lack of resolve and removed considerable psychological pressure that could have been exerted on the enemy.

This does not suggest that either the objectives or the nature of these wars should have been expanded, but rather the capability of the nation to quickly secure a quick and honorable peace. It

suggests that an overwhelming capability to secure rather modest goals might have been a quicker and less costly way to fight than to allocate only the minimum possible force in a war of attrition. It suggests that a short period of maximum effort might have disrupted the economy less and received greater popular support than a smaller war without end. It suggests that an enemy is more willing to accept a face-saving negotiated settlement when faced with overwhelming force and a determined nation with ever-increasing military capability than when faced with an equal force that wants to go home.

There is no truly similar situation that can be examined to determine exactly what would have occurred had the United States fully mobilized behind either the Korean or Vietnam war effort. Cuba perhaps gives certain insights. During the Cuban missile crisis there was a definite attempt to mobilize both the national resolve and the national military capability. The public was informed of the necessity for action, the nuclear bomber force was put on continuous airborne alert, and the ground, air, and naval forces were marshalled. With this clear display of national resolve and military capability, combined with very modest and limited objectives, war was completely avoided.

The Dominican Republic intervention is another excellent example, not of mobilization, but of using more than sufficient force to quickly do the job and come home. If there is any

correlation between either of these situations and our other limited wars, or if the suggestions mentioned above are correct, then the possibility exists that the Korean and Vietnam wars were unnecessarily prolonged as a result of our failure to mobilize the full resources of this nation behind these two war efforts. In the view of this author, limited wars should be limited in terms of political constraints on the battlefield but should not be limited in terms of national effort and resolve. In the final analysis, ". . . the use of a large force is likely to cost less and run fewer risks . . . than if a marginally sized force is used." 11

LIMITED WAR STRATEGY

When vital national interests are threatened the policymaker must decide whether to fight or not to fight. In making this decision, probable costs of war and probable outcomes, with full consideration given to the many uncertainties, must be weighed against the price of appeasement. In using the term appeasement it is meant that the nation would either sacrifice a moral principle or give up certain national interests rather than fight. In essence, appeasement results in taking the best terms possible without the use of force. Although there are many situations where a limited form of appeasement is the only feasible course of action, extreme care must be taken to insure that the opponent knows where he must stop and there is adequate deterrence to be convincing.

Hungary and Cuba are good examples of appeasement, or "conciliation" if one cannot tolerate the word "appeasement." In either of these cases there were no real alternatives short of nuclear war for at least one of the sides, and the costs of selecting this alternative far outweighed possible gains for the nation that would be forced to initiate the nuclear war. In the case of Hungary, the United States had to sit idly by at the sacrifice of a moral principle while the Soviets invaded a smaller nation. In this instance, no lines were drawn and no added deterrence of a convincing nature was developed by the United States. The result was the later Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

In the case of Cuba, the Soviets had no real capability to intervene conventionally and the United States, because of its strategic superiority, was willing to risk nuclear war to back up conventional capabilities. This Soviet appeasement, of a very limited nature, was the prelude to the political downfall of Nikita S. Khrushchev and a crash program of missile development. At the present time the Soviets have about a three to two advantage in¹² strategic missiles and it is doubtful if the United States could again demonstrate in a convincing manner a willingness to risk nuclear war over limited war objectives in the face of this Soviet nuclear capability.

In other cases where the decision is to fight rather than to back away from threats affecting vital national interests, a limited

war strategy must be developed. As pointed out earlier, it is essential that this strategy goes farther than just placing troops on the ground in possession of a piece of real estate. This strategy must also point the way to a logical and feasible way of terminating the conflict and bringing the troops home. In doing this, essential elements of the war plan must include: the rationale for the war; the designation of reasonable and limited objectives (which protect national interests yet provide a degree of face-saving victory for the opponent); methodology to be used in obtaining public support; concept of military operations; designation of political constraints; concept of diplomatic operations in dealing with the enemy, friendly nations, the United Nations, and potential enemies; concept for mobilizing the requisite support for the war; and finally, fall-back positions for dealing with the many uncertainties of war. These fall-back positions must, among other things, include alternatives for ending the war in the event that the primary course of action fails.

Having already discussed many of the above listed elements that should be included in a national limited war strategy, the remainder of this section will be limited to a discussion of some of the more important strategic concepts that should be considered during each phase of limited war. Specifically, the phases include: mobilization, coercion, initial combat operations, and fall-back positions for ending war, i.e., escalation, stalemate, withdrawal without settlement, and appeasement.

Mobilization

War is serious business. Vital national interests are at stake or war should not be considered. The nation must be serious about war rather than trying to be overly efficient, for as discussed earlier, the quickest way to fight a war is probably also the cheapest. Other key considerations are that wars fought by democracies must be kept short to maintain public support, that a display of national resolve and military capability is the best way to prevent war, and that if war comes, the best way to fight it is to get there the "firstest with the mostest."

All of the above indicates that when a nation is faced with war, the best and safest way to face the situation is to begin generating public support, military forces, and war materiel at the maximum possible rate. This does not mean that most limited war situations would be fought with reserves, for this is not the case.

Large-scale mobilization after a war has begun, rather than large-scale preparedness in anticipation of fighting that war, means that war protraction rather than early war termination is the first military objective.¹³

The basic reasons for mobilization when a limited war becomes imminent, other than in those few cases where there is little risk or uncertainty, is to demonstrate sufficient power and resolve to convince the enemy that there are better ways to settle the dispute than through war, to act as a strategic reserve to free more active forces for fighting the limited war, and to provide an additional threat at the time initial operations are concluded.

so that the enemy will be more willing to negotiate rather than face possible escalation.

Coercion

The basic reasons for using coercion are that the threat of force is frequently more effective than its use, it is much cheaper to protect national interests through coercion than through the use of force or escalation of force levels, and that fighting and the increased sacrifices of war both inhibit negotiations and normally result in both sides attempting to escalate their objectives.

Coercion takes place both before and during all phases of limited war and plays a leading role in negotiations. War will either be prevented or will end when the enemy perceives little hope of winning a military victory and when the peace terms are both politically feasible and a lesser evil than either the prospects of war, if war has not already broken out, or in continued fighting. For this reason it is most helpful to the negotiator if the enemy perceives from the outset that our offers are made in good faith, our objectives are limited, and that there is no possibility of deploying additional combat power to the area of the dispute at a faster rate than that being generated by the opposing side.

Initial Combat Operations

War is not for the timid. After all attempts have been made to avert the conflict to no avail and there is no recourse but to fight, combat operations should be carried out swiftly and in sufficient strength to decisively achieve those military objectives dictated by the national strategy. During initial operations, however, every attempt should be made to avoid civilian casualties and targets, lest these sacrifices on the part of the enemy make him fight even harder and make him less willing to negotiate. Two excellent examples of decisive initial results leading to an end to war were: (1) the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 during which Israeli forces struck quickly and accomplished their objectives before the enemy had time to react or their own supplies and economy had time to fail; and (2) the Dominican Republic intervention during the spring of 1965 during which United States forces were inserted and quickly brought an end to the severe fighting between two army factions. It may be argued that the first of these examples is not a limited war, although the Israeli objectives were limited and Soviet support for Egypt was limited. Regardless of the way these wars are viewed, however, they serve to illustrate a correct application of sufficient force to achieve decisive results. In both examples, sufficient forces were used in a swift and effective manner, civilian casualties were held to a minimum, and the losing side still retained the means for continued fighting, yet apparently perceived it to be in their best interests to accept a cease fire in lieu of continued war.

Fall-Back Positions

Many uncertainties are removed following initiation of combat operations when strength, capabilities, battlefield success, and outside support for the war effort became known. It soon becomes apparent whether the initial strategy for ending the war has been successful or whether fall-back positions will have to be used. There are basically five ways to end a war if the initial plan fails: coercion, escalation, stalemate, withdrawal without settlement, and appeasement. Depending on the situation, each of these methods can be used in any sequence; however, the most logical sequence, barring a totally unexpected event or miscalculation, is in the order listed. With the exception of coercion, which has already been discussed, basic strategic considerations for selection of each course of action are as follows:

Escalation

Before escalating a limited war, negotiators should be given a reasonable chance to terminate the war. During this period of negotiations, the military will probably be called upon to maintain pressure on the enemy and to stage forces in such a manner as to be perceived as a threat by the opponent for their coercive effect prior to escalation. Basic concepts for escalating the war are quite similar to those used in initial operations. Each escalation of the war should be bold and carried out in "mass" with "speed"

and "surprise" in order to achieve "decisive results." Although escalations in the war can be repeated as often as desired, it is far better to use a limited number of major escalations than many small but indecisive ones.

The basic difference between an escalation and the initial combat operation is that there will come a point in time, perhaps with the first but probably with subsequent escalations, when military operations will be designed to cause maximum punishment to the enemy nation. There is one school of thought that indicates that costs can be decisive in ending wars. ¹⁶ Although excessive civilian casualties should always be avoided where possible, the broadening of target lists will no doubt increase civilian casualties and damage to the industrial sector of the enemy nation during subsequent escalations if the enemy fails to negotiate. Again, these negotiations should be aimed at original, or non-escalated objectives, for to escalate objectives above that level required to protect national interests will serve no purpose but to prolong the war. The point in time when it becomes wise to turn to one of the other fall-back positions will depend largely upon the nature of the objectives, the risk of escalation beyond the acceptable bounds of the limited war, and the cost of continued escalation.

Stalemate

For a large scale war, a stalemate on the battlefield may be one of the most conducive situations for war termination. ¹⁷ The

major disadvantages of trying to end a war through stalemate seem to be the excessive cost and the loss of public support which is so necessary in a democracy. Throughout stalemate negotiations it is normally best if pressure is maintained on the enemy as well as a threat of escalation in order to provide an incentive¹⁸ for the enemy to conduct serious negotiations. Should stalemate negotiations fail, one alternative is to return to the use of coercion, such as occurred successfully in Korea after approximately two years of unsuccessful negotiations when a threat was made ". . . to expand the war geographically and perhaps even introduce¹⁹ nuclear weapons." Other alternatives include a return to escalation or to move on to one of the other two alternatives not yet discussed.

Withdrawal without Settlement

It takes both parties to agree to any negotiated settlement or cease-fire. If there is an absolute refusal by the opponent to come to any reasonable terms (or there is no one with whom to negotiate such as in the case of certain types of guerrilla operations), consideration should be given to making a unilateral withdrawal from the area of conflict if possible gains are not worth anticipated future costs of the war. This approach may result in a loss of prestige, an inability to secure the release of prisoners, and failure to receive any other assurances from the enemy.

Whenever this approach is used, it should be accompanied with appropriate facesaving statements, where possible, such as occurred following the six year United States intervention in Nicaragua during the period from 1927 to 1933. In this situation, the United States, having failed either to reach a settlement or

. . . to eliminate guerrilla forces, decided, for domestic political and financial reasons, to withdraw its troops and to declare its intervention to have been successful.²⁰

The declaration stated, in essence, that the United States

. . . had established the experimental basis for democratic government in Nicaragua and that it had created a nonpolitical national guard that would assure fair elections in the future. . . .²¹

Appeasement

The derogatory connotation of the word "appeasement" should never preclude consideration of this alternative, for in fact, many wars have been terminated when both sides were forced to sacrifice a moral principle or give up certain national interests. It must always be remembered that any war can end, the same as any war can be prevented, if one of the belligerents is willing to accept the terms offered by their opponent. The considerations for the use of this alternative method for ending a war are essentially the same as previously discussed. The only major changes in using appeasement after a war begins, rather than as a means of preventing

war, are: (1) the terms will probably be less favorable, (2) the loss of prestige will be greater, and (3) the political leader of the appeasing nation (if he started the war) will probably lose his job. The degree of each of these factors depends on the military situation and the nature of the appeasement. These disadvantages are a major reason why nations should insure that they not become involved in a war in which there is not a reasonable chance of ending it with one of the other alternatives.

MILITARY RESPONSIBILITIES

In concluding this chapter a word must be mentioned about military responsibilities. The reader has no doubt noted that although nearly everything mentioned in this monograph affects the military, the military is not directly responsible for the basic policy decisions that determine the success or failure of this nation in conducting limited war operations. The military does, however, play a key role in all planning activities leading up to war and is in a position to greatly influence all limited war decisions made by the political leadership of the nation. Serving in this advisory capacity, the military must assume major responsibility for recommending that all planning and operational aspects of a limited war be accomplished in accordance with concepts outlined above. Following promulgation of basic policy decisions by the political leadership, the military must then insure that these decisions are executed in coordination with the other elements of

the government. In doing this, particular attention must be given to the acceptance of political constraints, the limited objectives of the war, the requirements of the diplomat, and the broader perspectives of the policy maker concerning events outside the geographic area of the limited war. Failure to do this will result in costly errors, a longer war, and great anguish to both the military and to the nation alike.

CHAPTER IV

FOOTNOTES

1. Donald F. Bletzt, The Role of the Military Professional in U.S. Foreign Policy, p. 249.
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3. Ibid., p. 251.
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13. William T.R. Fox, "The Causes of Peace and Conditions of War," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies, November 1970, pp. 4-5.
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15. Bryce Wood, "How Wars End in Latin America," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies, November 1970, p. 48.

16. Berenice A. Carroll, "War Termination and Conflict Theory: Value Premises, Theories, and Policies," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Studies, November 1970, p. 20.

17. Fox, p. 11.

18. Ikle, pp. 90-91.

19. Ibid., p. 91.

20. Wood, p. 49.

21. Ibid., p. 48.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Volumns have been written on fighting wars, yet very little has been said about how they should end. This is particularly true of limited wars fought under the risk of strategic nuclear retaliation. The literature that is available is largely based on the limited experience to date, combined with opinions and theories. The reasons that are given for why wars won't end are complex, interrelated, and subject to disagreement as to the extent and exact role each factor may have played in prolonging a given war. Unique circumstances no doubt will also surround each future conflict which will require re-evaluation of any theories hypothesized at this time. For these reasons, the author does not claim to have "solved" the problems of war termination. There are, however, certain general conclusions which have been drawn from this study which may assist in improving the role of the military in ending future limited wars.

Limited wars are prolonged primarily as a result of a number of rather basic decisions such as those concerning vital national interests, national objectives, uncertainties in war, political constraints, conflict termination plans, national priorities, mobilization, and public relations. Although the military is not directly responsible for these decisions, military advisors are in

a dominant position to greatly influence all aspects of war. Because of this influential position, a most important role of the military in ending limited wars is to provide sound recommendations to the policy maker concerning all matters related to the conduct of war. Of particular importance are recommendations and actions related to the matters discussed in subsequent paragraphs. In making recommendations, extreme care must be taken neither to cause disunity of purpose nor to serve parochial interests at national expense.

It is essential that limited wars remain limited. No limited war objective is worth the devastation of the United States in a strategic nuclear exchange, and therefore, political constraints must be established to insure that any future war remains limited. Although the concept of constraining military operations is a correct and necessary one, constraints must be established in a manner which permits proper employment of forces. If constraints are either too stringent or changed in a manner which dictates a piecemeal commitment of forces, then military operations will be ineffective. If military forces are considered incapable of executing assigned missions within the constraints necessary to prevent unacceptable escalation of the war, it is better not to fight. Better terms can be reached with the threat of force than with its use when political constraints are so excessive as to preclude effective military operations.

Wars are fought for political objectives rather than for military victory per se. National objectives should be carefully selected in order to insure that all vital interests are protected, yet still provide a degree of face-saving victory for the opponent. If war is to be kept limited, objectives must also be limited and both sides must share in the eventual victory. Either unrealistically high objectives or the escalation of objectives based on early military successes will only prolong a war and may result in an eventual requirement to accept less favorable terms of settlement after a long, bitter, and costly war.

A master war-fighting and war-ending strategy should be developed at the earliest opportunity. Most wars are started without any concept of how they may eventually end. It is absolutely essential that a master strategy be developed in order to coordinate all elements of national power, to provide a sense of purpose to the national effort, to insure that proper thought has been given to the task of ending the war at an early time, and to diminish factional and public turmoil. This plan should, as a minimum, include: the rationale for the war; the designation of reasonable and limited objectives; methodology to be used in obtaining public support; the concept of military operations; the designation of political constraints; the concept of diplomatic operations in dealing with the enemy, friendly nations, the United Nations, and potential enemies; the concept for mobilizing the requisite support for the war; and finally, fall-back positions for dealing with the many uncertainties of war.

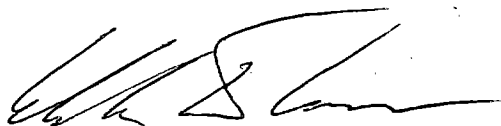
Public support is essential for the successful conduct of limited war in a democracy. This support is necessary to insure adequate support for the war effort, to allow operational freedom of action for the military to perform its mission in the most effective manner, and to develop a more favorable atmosphere for negotiations. The public is more likely to give support at or near the beginning of a war than at any other time. It is therefore essential that public debate be permitted at the earliest opportunity. As the public support for a war will probably diminish with time, sufficient military force should be used to expeditiously accomplish the assigned task while the public remains fully committed to the war effort.

Limited wars should be limited in terms of political constraints on the battlefield but not in terms of national effort or resolve. The use of overwhelming force (principle of mass) will normally result in fewer losses and less cost than gradual escalation (piecemeal commitment). When a nation is faced with war, the safest course of action is to begin generating public support, military forces, and war materiel. Mobilization of sufficient military power and national resolve may convince the enemy to settle the dispute through peaceful means. Should deterrence fail, mobilization provides an improved capability to wage war and to negotiate peace.

Adequate force should be used to accomplish the limited war mission in a swift and decisive manner and to provide flexibility

in dealing with the uncertainties of war. In the conduct of these operations it is essential that the military display technical competence in accomplishing each mission in a highly effective manner. Tactical success and an overwhelming and ever increasing capability to take by force more than is asked at the negotiating table should materially assist in bringing about a quick and honorable peace.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that there is no easy way to end a limited war. Although it is hopeful that some of the concepts discussed above may be helpful in improving the role of the military in shortening limited wars, it is recognized that there is no "easy solution" to this problem. Because of the many inherent difficulties in ending war, agreements can more easily be reached before rather than after the start of hostilities. It must be remembered that the threat of force is frequently more effective than its use, especially when one party has clear military superiority over the other. One cardinal lesson to be learned from this study is that, when possible, wars should be stopped before they begin through the coercive effects of sufficient power and national resolve.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eldon D. Carr', is positioned above the printed name.

ELDON D. CARR
LTC, Infantry

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